

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-07

INFO OCT-01 SS-14 ISO-00 EB-03 NSC-05 NSCE-00 SP-02 L-01

INR-05 CIAE-00 PRS-01 /039 W
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P 301150Z MAY 75

FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 4564

INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

AMEMBASSY JIDDA PRIORITY

AMCONSUL DHAHRAN

C O N F I D E N T I A L BEIRUT 6848

LIMDIS

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: ENRG, ELTN, JO, SA, LE, US

SUBJECT: TAPLINE PROBLEM: GOL AND JORDAN TEAMS TO SAUDI

REF: BEIRUT 6582 AND EARLIER

1. DISTURBANCES HERE SINCE REFTEL DELAYED VISIT
BUT ALSO CAUSED TAPLINE TO "DEFER FOR TIME BEING"
FORMAL STAFF REDUCTION BEGINNING MAY
27.

2. DODGE NOW INFORMS US THAT BLUE RIBBON FOUR-MAN
TEAM LEAVING FOR SAUDI ARABIA TONIGHT FOR APPOINTMENT
TOMORROW, MAY 31, WITH OILMIN YAMANI. TEAM'S COMPO-
SITION INDICATES TALKS MAY BE SUBSTANTIVE AS WELL AS
TECHNICAL. TEAM LEADER NOW IS CARETAKER FINANCE AND
FOREIGN MINISTER LUCIEN DAHDAH, CHAIRMAN OF BOARD OF
INTRA INVESTMENT CO. AND BROTHER OF PRESIDENT
FRANGIEH'S SON-IN-LAW. OTHER MEMBERS ARE SALEM
AND ACHOUR (REFTEL) AND DR. SALIM AL-HOSS, PRESIDENT
OF DEVELOPMENT BANK, WHO APPARENTLY REPLACES HITTI
OF GOL OIL MINISTRY. DODGE DOES NOT KNOW OF ANY
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APPOINTMENTS BEYOND YAMANI BUT SAYS SCHEDULE IS

FLEXIBLE, TEAM WILL REMAIN AS LONG AS IT USEFUL.

3. DODGE ALSO ADVISED THAT TWO-MAN JORDANIAN TEAM RETURNING TO SAUDI ARABIA SUNDAY, JUNE 1, FOR FURTHER TALKS TAPLINE PROBLEM. TEAM COMPOSED OF FINANCE MINISTER AND CENTRAL BANK GOVERNOR. THEIR APPOINTMENTS UNKNOWN HERE, NOR IS IT CLEAR HOW CLOSELY COORDINATED TWO TEAMS ARE, BUT GOL'S SALEM AND JORDAN BANK GOVERNOR HAVE CONSULTED ON THIS PROBLEM IN PAST.

4. DODGE UNABLE SAY HOW LTNG BEIRUT STAFF REDUCTION DEFERRED.

COMMENT: WOULD BE DIFFICULT TO FIND BETTER-QUALIFIED GOL TEAM THAN THAT CHOSEN. LEADER DAHDAH IS PROMINENT BEIRUT BUSINESSMAN AND CLOSE TO PRESIDENT FRANGIEH. SALEM AND ACHOUR QUITE FAMILIAR WITH TECHNICAL AND SUBSTANTIVE ASPECTS OF PROBLEM. HOSS IS MOST COMPETENT FINANCIAL EXPERT FAMILIAR WITH LEBANON'S OVERALL DEVELOPMENT PROBLEMS. ALTHOUGH UNRESTRAINED OPTIMISM PREMATURE, IT APPEARS THAT GOL SERIOUSLY FOCUSING ON PROBLEM. WE WOULD HOPE SAG CAN FIND TIME MAKE SERIOUS EFFORT AT PROGRESS AND THAT ARAMCO CAN DEFER TAPLINE STAFF REDUCTIONS SO AS NOT RPT NOT TO DIVERT ANY MOMENTUM WHICH MIGHT DEVELOP. GODLEY

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: PETROLEUM PIPELINES, BUSINESS FIRMS, PERSONNEL SEPARATIONS, VISITS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 30 MAY 1975
Decaption Date: 28 MAY 2004
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: KelleyW0
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975BEIRUT06848
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750189-0866
From: BEIRUT
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t1975053/aaaaabtb.tel
Line Count: 88
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION NEA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: LIMDIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: LIMDIS
Reference: 75 BEIRUT 6582
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: KelleyW0
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 13 AUG 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <13 AUG 2003 by KelleyW0>; APPROVED <02 DEC 2003 by KelleyW0>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
05 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: TAPLINE PROBLEM: GOL AND JORDAN TEAMS TO SAUDI
TAGS: ENRG, ELTN, JO, SA, LE, US, TAPLINE
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 05 JUL 2006